

Title of Session: The Art of Storytelling - Adrienne Fritze

Moderator: BJ Berquist

Guest Speaker: Adrienne Fritze

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Room: The Art of Storytelling Group

BJB2: Adrienne, can we start with introductions, please?

AdrienneF: Absolutely...

AdrienneF: Hi All, I'm Adrienne Fritze out here in Oregon

BJB2 waves hi. I teach communication and am in Pennsylvania

JeffC waves to Adrienne... yup... it's been a while!

AdrienneF: I'm an artist, writer, and applied arts facilitator

AdrienneF: Jeff and Ashley, tell us a bit about you....

AshleySt: I am a sophomore at Franklin College, in Indiana. I'm an Elementary Ed. major, and this is my first seminar on tapped-in. I'm not really familiar with it yet.

AdrienneF: Very cool to have you here Ashley....

AshleySt: thanks!

BJB2: welcome to the Tapped In community, Ashley

AshleySt: thanks very much! =)

JeffC: Currently I'm subbing in Forest Grove Oregon... almost had my dream job with edZapp (a teacher job site)... but they just decided to change the description... so it's pending. I'm on Helpdesk here.

AdrienneF: Good to "see" you again after all this time

JeffC: yup

AdrienneF: so, tonight I'd like to kind of meander along a dialogue regarding forms of storytelling and ways I've used different techniques for different applications

AdrienneF: is that a good topic for you all?

BJB2 sits back and listens eagerly

AshleySt: of course!

AdrienneF: I'll put up a couple of URLs to a couple of different projects in which I've used storytelling - but they are different "art" forms (if you will)

AdrienneF: One that BJ is familiar with is Empty & Meaningless: the Box Project

AdrienneF: <http://www.urbanesque.com/empty/>

BJB2 nods. Adrienne's Box Project inspired my own Cultural Identity Box

BJB2: did you get the url, Ashley?

AshleySt: Yes, I did

AdrienneF: This is an ontological coaching process that uses verbal and written techniques to kind of brush away the topmost chunks of internal storytelling folks do that get in the way of some of the deeper storytelling that's the key to transforming one's life - by transforming the stories we tell....

AdrienneF: Then we add a layer of visual arts to deepen the investigation

AdrienneF: Kind of like allowing one's heart to lead the way once the thinking brain has been appeased and left to rest for a bit

AdrienneF: The technique we pursue in this form of storytelling is first Deconstruction

AdrienneF: then Creating a New Process of Thought

AdrienneF: This URL takes you to one individuals box and his story:
http://www.urbanesque.com/empty/box_stories.html

AdrienneF: What he's done here is identify his own internal monologuing about his life...

AdrienneF: If you read the sides of his box, see the images he created to explore those concepts/beliefs/insights/etc. you get an idea of the power of his stories

AdrienneF: The final story he composes on the box is his re-creation

AdrienneF: in this case as a Mighty Oak tree

BJB2: kind of heavy for the elementary crowd, but you could do something similar by

having children write autobiographies, Ashley

AdrienneF: absolutely

AshleySt: ok, great!

AdrienneF: children LOVE this kind of project because it combines verbalizing, orating, writing, visual expressions....

BJB2: learn similes...my life is like...

BJB2 . o O (a road, a puzzle, a river)

AdrienneF: And the kids are soooooooooooooooooo amazing at internal exploration

AshleySt: yeah, that's a good idea

AshleySt: haha

AdrienneF: and giving us an external look at it through their art

AdrienneF: I tell my own stories as well - as an artist, poet and essayist

AdrienneF: And I use those art forms to inspire and impact the lives of others who may see a bit of themselves within my work

AdrienneF: Here's my website: <http://AdrienneFritze.com/>

AdrienneF: When you go there, at the top of the page you'll see several images....

AdrienneF: The leftmost image is from a trip I took to England to study with some of the world's most amazing applied arts facilitators - folks who work in prisons using their art forms (as I have and do)

AdrienneF: Photography is a POWERFUL storytelling tool

AdrienneF: And now with software like Photoshop and some of the simpler editing tools, you can enhance the stories you tell

AdrienneF: Taking a shot of the Millennium Wheel may not seem all that amazing - it's been done a million times (or more literally)

AdrienneF: But that one shot was during Christmas - and the blue Christmas lights really pulled at my heart strings

AdrienneF: blue means many things....

JeffC: Larry's box story is a lot more compelling than "just say no" programs... of course since the words "promiscuous sex" appear... no doubt that it would be filtered by most school districts.

AdrienneF: Well, truth be told, I've been allowed to bring that box, and dozens of others, into the schools - AND - when I did this project with two eight grade classes, the stories contained similar truths....

AdrienneF: it's amazing what you can get to with images

AdrienneF: that are not kosher when spoken

JeffC: right... just commenting on the website.

AdrienneF: so, on my webpage banner the next few shots are of my collage work - and these are part of a larger project - a book combining those images, essay and poetry about the way art makes a difference in my life and the lives of others

AdrienneF: again, it's all about building up the story....

BJB2: there is a great deal of trust that must be nurtured in building story...the author has to trust the audience and vice versa

AdrienneF: I start with the intention of having people experience love in its best possible light - self love, unconditional love, agape or god-love

AdrienneF: the interesting thing about providing a safe environment for others to tell their stories

AdrienneF: is to be conscious and aware of your personal intention

AdrienneF: from there - the folks you are engaging with then have the freedom to honestly explore their own stories

BJB2 agrees.

AdrienneF: we've all derived meaning from our lives - but we've seldom been given tools to express those stories in our own artistic and creative ways

AdrienneF: both negative and positive meanings

AdrienneF: using the arts to tell our stories gives us a degree of control over our lives

AdrienneF: it's a first-hand experience for us to see that we are indeed in control

AdrienneF: make sense?

AshleySt: yes, it does

AdrienneF: the last weblink I'm going to share is a presentation I gave in early February

AdrienneF: The topic is heavy - but also joyous

AdrienneF: and it uses a combination of my artwork, images of people, written words, spoken word (my own) to tell a story that's important to me

AdrienneF: the title of the presentation is "Living a Made Up Life and Getting Away With It"

AdrienneF: <http://youtube.com/watch?v=rM6qECYIE9I>

AdrienneF: There were 14 of us chosen to give presentations at an event in Portland called Ignite Portland

AdrienneF: The format of the presentation (which of course is storytelling) was 20 slides up for 15 seconds each with the presenter speaking to each as it went along its merry way with or without you keeping in sync

BJB2: each person had the same requirements?

AdrienneF: The idea of telling compelling stories is to know what your intention is, know what kind of response you'd like to elicit, be brave to include insightful and insightful material that catches your breath (and hopefully the audiences breath)

BJB2 . o O (20 slides/15 sec each?)

AdrienneF: Yes, exactly the same format for each presentation

AdrienneF: And then conclude your story with a power punch that drives home the theme you've presented all the way through

AdrienneF: The beauty of this particular format is that you become crystal clear what's important in telling a story

BJB2 nods.

AdrienneF: And you also become crystal clear on the focus of your own life and passions

BJB2 . o O (perhaps I'll try this format for the next conference I present to)

AdrienneF: It's amazing

AdrienneF: And a rush

AdrienneF: I have stage fright so for me it was a tremendous challenge and breakthrough to do that presentation

AdrienneF: I can present in my classes forever, talk about business to thousands, but presenting the nuts and bolts of what drives me is daunting

AdrienneF: It's a great tool for anyone to learn to use

BJB2: what was audience reaction?

AdrienneF: It was amazing - there were moments of laughter - lots of applause - many times you could hear a pin drop in the place

AdrienneF: In the end a standing ovation

BJB2 smiles. Congratulations!

AdrienneF: I said this before I got on stage....

AshleySt: did the audience share any stories with you?

AdrienneF: "Before I tell you who I am, I'm going to tell you how I am."

AdrienneF: "I'm terrified!!!"

AdrienneF: They laughed and we just went on from there

AdrienneF: Yes, I had many many people come up afterwards

AdrienneF: and in subsequent days

AdrienneF: and have had dozens write to thank me for the presentation

AdrienneF: for me it really was the proving ground for using the arts to tell compelling, and inspirational stories

AdrienneF: and the experience has emboldened the people around me

AdrienneF: my students especially

AdrienneF: which brings me to another point about storytelling

AdrienneF: it's essential that we pass on stories to each other and our children

AdrienneF: and that we pay attention to the stories we tell

AdrienneF: and allow them to tell their stories, so they know they are being heard

AdrienneF: once a person knows they are being heard

AdrienneF: they then have an opportunity to change, evolve, grow, be powerful

AdrienneF: using the arts to help people tell those stories - all the arts - dance, theatre, music, sound art (my new project is a sound art project), film, literature, mixed media....here online

AdrienneF: using the arts is critical

AdrienneF: okay - are you overwhelmed? have questions?

BJB2 hopes Adrienne is going to participate in the TI Festival this year...the theme is Blanket the World with Peace...peace through the resolution of conflict

AshleySt: If you could only give me one word to sum up the best way to tell stories what would that be?

BJB2 . o O (as in children of war, abuse, neglect, poverty, etc)

AdrienneF: authenticity

AdrienneF: truly be authentic

AdrienneF: allow authenticity

BJB2: brilliant, Adrienne...a perfect answer

AshleySt: I agree, that's a snazzy answer!

AdrienneF: thanks...it's the only tool that worked for me all these years with all these different populations with which I've been privileged to work

AdrienneF: And re: the conference, let's chat

AdrienneF: ;-)

AdrienneF: Jeff, anything for you?

BJB2: are you a member of the TI Festival group, Adrienne?

AdrienneF: no...

BJB2: join that group and you'll know about upcoming meetings

AdrienneF: okay - will do

BJB2 . o O (and summaries of meetings/discussions)

AdrienneF: cool

JeffC: sorry... was on the phone.

JeffC: nope... nothing for me.

AshleySt: Adrienne, did you say that you were a teacher?

AdrienneF: well, I'm not sure I have much more to type...while knowing I could go on forever about the importance of authentic storytelling and storyhearing

AdrienneF: or maybe better written, storylistening

AdrienneF: I'm not a teacher in the formal sense

AdrienneF: I teach business courses to artists and creatives

BJB2: ahhh...listening is a lost skill I'm afraid

AshleySt: ok, but nonetheless you still teach!

AdrienneF: and I facilitate applied arts programs in various situations and institutions

AdrienneF: I lead, learn

AdrienneF: do a whole lot of learning

AdrienneF: and pass along techniques, insights, processes, thinking to others I've found helpful

AdrienneF: if that's teaching, then yepers, I teach

AdrienneF: ;-)

AdrienneF: what are your experiences with storytelling Ashley?

AdrienneF: And Jeff?

AdrienneF: And BJ?

BJB2: there are a whole bunch of storytelling resources listed in this group room, Ashley...

AshleySt: Other than shooting the breeze with family and friends I haven't done any. I haven't told stories to students quite yet.

BJB2: you might want to join this group

JeffC: well... I used autobiographical incident strategies from the bay area writing project when I taught at Richmond high... and had my low-achieving 9th graders published internationally.

AdrienneF: now Jeff THAT's a story worth sharing!!!!

JeffC: so... having them tell their own stories... yup.

JeffC: you can read about it at <http://snurl.com/netc1>

JeffC: and done some collaborative storytelling/building online with grammar school kids... not a lot though.

AdrienneF: I'm bookmarking the netc site

AdrienneF: A great place to start with telling stories I've found

AdrienneF: is to ask questions of others and listen to theirs

JeffC: yup

AdrienneF: Kids are master storytellers - of truth and fantasy

AdrienneF: blended

AdrienneF: and to have them share their thinking, and internal adventures is such a hoot!

AdrienneF: they've got story telling structures down

AdrienneF: LOL

AdrienneF: Ashley, what can you see for yourself and your future in what's been shared?

AshleySt: I can see myself explaining difficult concepts to kindergarteners, but in a way they understand and like

AdrienneF: And what impact do you envision that having? Not just on them, but also on you?

AshleySt: I will learn about things, too. and most likely remember them better

AdrienneF: Cool.

AshleySt: it's easier to remember things when u can tie a meaning behind them

AdrienneF: For me the art of sharing stories in all these formats came from learning to hear the stories of others

AdrienneF: It's made such a profound impact on my life

AshleySt: that's neat!

AdrienneF: I suspect you shall have quite an amazing journey

AshleySt: haha, I reckon so

AdrienneF: Yeppers...

AdrienneF: LOL

AdrienneF: the older you get, the more stories there are to share....

AdrienneF: ROFLMAO

AdrienneF: <sigh>

AdrienneF: I've come to the end of this tale this evening....I very much appreciate you all being here

AshleySt: and the wiser you get!

AdrienneF: HOPEFULLY!!!!!!

AshleySt: thank you!

AdrienneF: ;-)

AdrienneF: BJ, is there anything you'd like to add as we get ready to bid each other adieu?

BJB2 hugs Adrienne. Thanks so much for presenting

AdrienneF: thank you for having me here...

AdrienneF: I forget what an amazing community and toll this is here

BJB2: talk to you soon

JeffC: thanks Adrienne

AdrienneF: Be well all!

AdrienneF: You are most welcome....

AdrienneF: ;-)

BJB2 waves goodnight

AdrienneF: goodnight!

BJB2: thanks, Ashley, for joining us

AshleySt: Oh thanks for having me, and helping me out with figuring this out! haha

BJB2: The more discussions you participate in the easier it gets...and the more you learn about the Tapped In community

BJB2 . o O (as you can see, we're all life-long learners ;-)

BJB2 heads for bed to recover from all this learning!

AshleySt: very true. thanks again, everyone